

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A system for distributing digital works includes a package associated with a desired one of the digital works, a customer node used by a customer, and a remote server. The remote server and the customer node are intermittently coupled through a communications link which includes a public communications network, preferably the Internet.

The digital works and their associated identification data are first stored on a memory of the remote server. To distribute the digital works, the customer purchases from the retail merchant the package associated with the desired one of the digital works, which includes the desired digital work's identification data. The customer then connects from the customer node through the public communications network to the remote server. The customer node sends a request to access the desired digital work through the public communications network to the remote server, specifying the desired digital work's identification data included in the purchased package. The remote server receives the request to access the desired digital work and searches the digital works stored on the remote server for the desired digital work specified by the identification data in the received request. If the desired digital work is found, it is transmitted from the remote server through the public communications network to the customer node. When the desired digital work is received at the customer node, it is stored on a memory of the customer node for subsequent access and use by the customer.